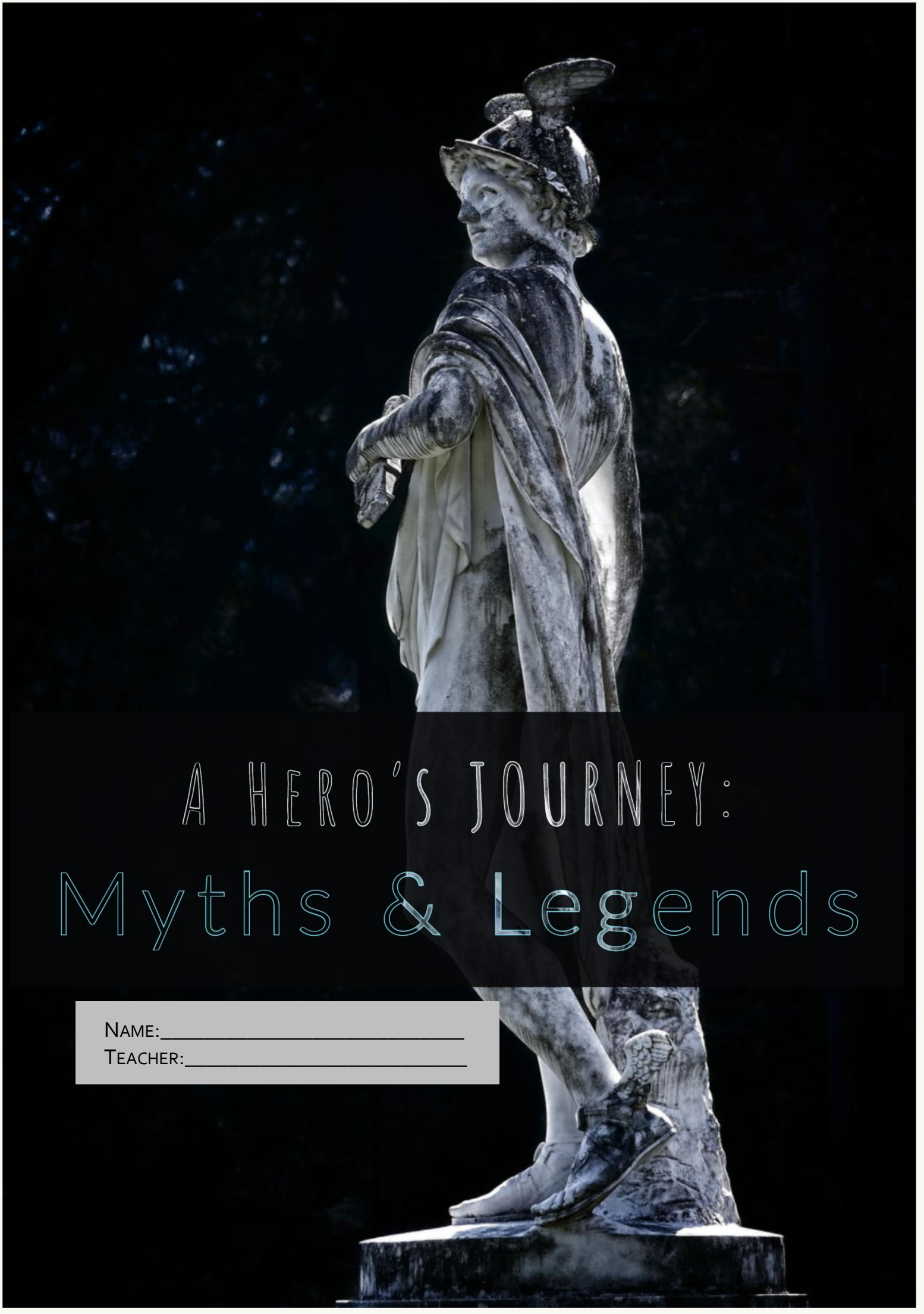


A Hero's Journey:

Myths & Legends

NAME:_____

TEACHER:_____

Part One: Myths

What is a Myth?

Myths are stories that are based on tradition. Some may have factual origins, while others are completely fictional. But myths are more than mere stories and they serve a more profound[1] purpose in ancient and modern cultures. Myths are sacred[2] tales that explain the world and man's experience. Myths are as relevant to us today as they were to the ancients. Myths answer timeless questions and serve as a compass[3] to each generation. The myths of lost paradise, for example, give people hope that by living a virtuous[4] life, they can earn a better life in the hereafter. The myths of a golden age give people hope that there are great leaders who will improve their lives. The hero's quest is a model for young men and women to follow, as they accept adult responsibilities. Some myths simply reassure, such as myths that explain natural phenomena as the actions of gods, rather than arbitrary[5] events of nature.

Source: https://www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes/myths_what.html

[1]**profound** (*adjective*): deep
[2]**sacred** (*adjective*): holy or belonging to God(s); religious or protected
[3]**serve as a compass** (*metaphor*): act as a guide (in life)
[4]**virtuous** (*adjective*): good
[5]**arbitrary** (*adjectives*): based on personal preference or whim rather than a logical reason.

🕮Answer the following questions in your exercise book🕮

1. According to the source, what do myths do?
2. Are myths fact or fiction? Use a quotation from the text to support your answer.
3. Which four different kinds of myths are mentioned by the source?
4. What purpose does each of the kinds of myths serve?
5. What features do you think are typical when reading and writing a myth?
   Create a checklist using the headers below.

Myths are about…	**Myths include characters which…**
Settings for myths are often…	**Good myth writing includes…**

Ten Characteristics of a Myth

1. **A myth is a story that is, or was considered, a true explanation of the natural world and how it came to be.**
2. **Characters** are often non-human and are typically gods, goddesses, supernatural beings or mystical "first people."
3. **Setting** is typically ancient, or prior to the time when actual records were kept. Myths are typically set in a world very similar to our own, but with supernatural monsters or areas.
4. **The plot** of a myth may take place between a supernatural world and our present day world. Myths do this to highlight the basic human behaviours that are essential in any setting.
5. Myths **possess events that bend or break natural laws**. This is often done to magnify the "super-naturalness" of the mythical world.
6. Promotes "Social Action"—myths try to tell people how to act and live. Core values such as individualism, family and community are often instilled in mythical heroes.
7. Myths have sense of **mystery, or the unknown**.
8. **Dualities** (or complete opposites such as night/day, good/evil) often play important roles in the plot of a myth.
9. **Myths often have an emphasis on language.** Mythical heroes are often sophisticated storytellers.
10. **Myths are often metaphoric—**myths are created to comment or analyse a real world event. Real world questions that myths often attempt to answer are:

    - Why are we here?
    - Who are we?
    - Why are we living? What is our purpose?

Adapted from "What is a Myth?" by Mary Magoulick www.facutly.de.gcsu.edu

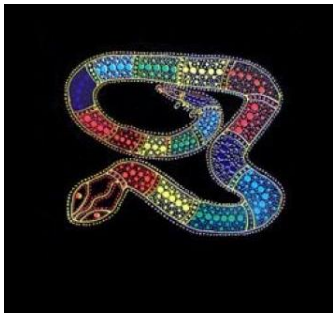
🕮🕮 RESEARCH ZONE 🕮🕮

Choose a popular myth and create a presentation to explore the myth and its meanings to the class. Your presentations should answer these questions:

1. Where is your myth from?
2. Which kind of myth is it?
3. What happens in your myth?
4. What is the moral or lesson in the myth**?**
5. Are there any modern adaptations or links to your myth that keep it relevant?

- ☐ Pandora's Box
- ☐ King Midas' golden touch
- ☐ Odysseus and the Cyclops
- ☐ Perseus and the Gorgon Medusa
- ☐ Athena and Arachne
- ☐ Hercules (Heracles)
- ☐ Loki and Thor's Hammer
- ☐ Idun and her golden apples
- ☐ The Chinese Zodiac – years of the animals

Thugine, the Rainbow and the Wandering Boys



Far to the west in the deep blue sea there dwells a great serpent named Thugine. His scales are of many shimmering colours. When a rainbow appears in the sky, it is Thugine curving his back and the sun reflecting the colours of his scales.

Many years ago, a mob camped close to a sea beach. One morning they all went out to fish and hunt, with the exception of two boys, whom the old men left in charge of the camp. Wander not into the forest lest the wild dogs eat you, or to the beach, where Thugine the serpent is waiting for children who wander alone." This was the parting advice of the old men to the boys.

When the men had departed, the boys played about the camp for a while, but they soon grew tired of their games. The day was very hot, and in the distance the boys could hear the dull, deep booming of the surf. Both the boys were longing to go to the beach, but were afraid to speak their desire. At last the elder boy spoke, and said: "The fires of the sun are burning bright to-day, but on the breeze I can feel the cool breath of the sea. Let us go to the beach, and we shall return before the shadow of night has fallen. The men will not know." The other boy hesitated and was afraid, but at last he yielded, and together they wandered hand in hand through the bush.

After walking for some time they came to an opening in the trees, and, before their expectant gaze, a wonderful scene unfolded. A golden beach stretched far away until it was lost to view in the dim distance. The cool waves rolled lazily in great green billows from the outer reef, and dashed in a haze of sparkling white foam on the hot sands of the palm-fringed beach. The song of the sea rose in a deep, loud booming, and gradually died away to a low, soft murmuring. The boys were lost in wonder at the beauty of the scene. Never had they seen such an expanse of water sparkling in the sun like the blue sky. Over its rippled surface the shadows of the clouds floated like sails across the sun.

Thugine, the serpent, had seen the boys coming from afar, and, while they played on the beach, he swam swiftly and silently to the shore and seized them. When the men arrived at the camp, they discovered the absence of the boys. They searched the bush all through the -night, and at dawn came to the beach. Far from the shore they saw two, black rocks jutting out of the sea. Then they knew that Thugine had taken the wandering boys and turned them into rocks. The men turned their faces again towards the camp; their hearts were heavy and their thoughts were sad.

To this day the rocks remain between Double Island Point and Inskip Point, when a rainbow appears in the sky, the old men of the tribe tell the story of the disobedience and punishment of the wandering boys.

Source: https://www.sacred-texts.com/aus/mla/mla17.htm

📖 Using the *10 characteristics of a myth* as a checklist, do you think this story from Australia's First Peoples is an example of an Australian myth?

ZERO TO HERO

Can you think of any heroes? What qualities make them heroic?

In myths 'Heroes' often meet a certain criteria, these include:

- Having royal or divine parent(s) – which the hero may or may not know
- A connection to or ability to interact with the gods
- If they don't know their parents, they are often adopted by poor but good people
- doing heroic deeds
- going on a journey or quest
- Acts of strength – both physical and moral
- Superhuman abilities – typically speed, strength or mental acuity.
- Defeat mythical creatures and monsters
- Unafraid of death (and may journey to and return from the Underworld)
- Sometimes seeking glory or fame (or to prove their abilities)
- For male heroes, deaths that are prophesied or foretold (and at times may seem mystical or mysterious); female heroes' deaths typically involve some form of self-sacrifice – upon their deaths heroes are given mythic status and made immortal in memory (of people or the gods).

Adapted from "The Mythic Hero" by Dr Janice Siegal
http://people.hsc.edu/drjclassics/lectures/MythicHero/mythichero.shtm

Mythic heroes won't fit all of these criteria, but will meet most of them. Can you think of any heroes who fit most of these criteria?

Using the checklist, determine if these mythical characters are heroes or zeroes.	**Hero**	**Zero**
Hercules Brave and powerful Hercules is the son of Zeus and Alcmene (a granddaughter of Perseus), Hercules grew up to become a famed warrior. But Zeus's jealous wife, Hera, made him temporarily insane, and he killed his wife and children. As punishment Hercules performed twelve seemingly impossible labours, which have been the subject of countless works of art and drama. Hercules is often depicted wearing a lion skin and wielding a club.		
Chimera The Chimera was a ferocious, fire breathing monstrosity that possessed the body and head of a lion with the head of a goat protruding from its back and a snake for a tail. The brief description of the Chimera in the text of *The Iliad* is the earliest surviving record of the creature. The Chimera is traditionally considered to have been a female, and was said to have given birth to the Sphinx and the Nemean lion. The Chimera was feared and believed to have been an omen for storms, shipwrecks and other natural disasters.		
Cerberus Cerberus is Hades' loyal guard dog; he was a massive hound with three heads that guarded the entrance to the underworld. It was said that the beast only had an appetite for living flesh and so would only allow the deceased spirits to pass, while consuming any living mortal who was foolish enough to come near him. It is said that the three heads were meant to symbolize the past, present and future. In other versions of the myth the three heads represent youth, adult hood, and old age.		
Odysseus King of Ithaca and a celebrated warrior, Odysseus helped the Greeks triumph in the Trojan War. Afterward he journeyed nearly ten years to return home to Ithaca and his wife Penelope. Along the way Odysseus's courage and cleverness saved him from such monsters as the Cyclops Polyphemus, the Sirens, and Scylla and Charybdis. Back in Ithaca, Odysseus proved his identity to Penelope and once again ruled his homeland. These adventures are told in Homer's epic poem, the Odyssey.		
Prometheus Though he was born of the Titan Iapetus by Clymene or Themis, Prometheus foresaw the defeat of the Titans by the Olympian Gods so he allied himself with Zeus. Yet Prometheus eventually angered Zeus by stealing fire and bringing it to mankind. As punishment, Zeus gave Pandora (and, with her, all the evils of the world) to man, and condemned Prometheus to be chained to a rock in the Caucasus Mountains, where his liver was eaten daily by an eagle. According to some versions of the story, Prometheus was eventually freed by Hercules.		
Orpheus The son of Calliope and Apollo, Orpheus was a brilliant musician. When he played the lyre, he could charm wild animals and even make rivers stand still. When Orpheus' wife, Eurydice, died, he went down to the underworld to find her. There, his music softened the heart of Hades, who let Orpheus take Eurydice back to the living world on one condition: Orpheus had to walk in front of Eurydice and he couldn't look back at her until they had both left the underworld. But the temptation to see his beloved was too great, and Orpheus looked back. Eurydice vanished forever.		
Typhon He was birthed from Gaia (the earth) and Tartarus (the depths of hell). He was said to have been the most ferocious creature ever to roam the earth. Typhon was massive: when he stood upright, his head brushed against the stars. The lower half of his body consisted of two coiled viper tails that constantly were hissing. Instead of fingers, several dragon heads erupted from his hands. He was said to have wings that, when spread, could blot out the sun. Fire flashed from his eyes, striking fear into the heart of any living creature, even the mighty Olympians. Typhon was so mighty, that the only conceivable opponent to defy him was Zeus himself.		

THE TROJAN WAR

Each of the great cities of Greece sent an army to join the war against the Trojans – each, that is, except for one: The city of Thebes refused to join the war, saying that it had no quarrel with the far away Trojans, and so the Greek King Agamemnon (Aga-mem-non) decided to teach the Thebans a lesson. He ordered his men to destroy their beautiful city and take its treasure – and that is what they did. While the ruined city of Thebes was still burning, the greatest of the Greek warriors shared out the prizes of war.

King Agamemnon chose for himself one of the captives - a beautiful young girl called Chryseis (Cry-see-is), a priest's daughter. Agamemnon told her that she must live with him from now on, and be his slave. The girl wept bitterly and begged to be returned to her father, but King Agamemnon had a cruel heart and was unmoved by her tears.

Eventually, the Greek ships reached Troy, and the army set up a vast camp on the beach not far from the city. One evening, the good old priest, who was the father of Chryseis, arrived at the camp and asked to meet King Agamemnon and all the greatest of the Greeks.

He said, "Oh Agamemnon, leader of men, may the gods grant your wish to destroy the magnificent city of Troy, and may all the Greeks return home safely in their black ships, but grant me this favour; free my daughter and accept in her place a gift of great treasure that I have brought for you."

The Greek army cheered the old man for his generous offer, and for the love that he had shown for his daughter, but Agamemnon flew into a rage. "Old man," said he, "let me not find you hanging about our ships, nor coming here again. I will not free your lovely daughter. She shall grow old in my house, in Argos, far from her home. So get out of my sight right now, or it will be the worse for you!"

The priest was afraid and swiftly left, but later that evening he knelt down on the shore of the resounding sea and prayed to the immortal god, Apollo of the silver bow. Apollo heard the good old man's prayer for just revenge, and he took up his silver bow and fired arrows into the Greek camp. The arrows of Apollo brought disease, and many of the Greek soldiers fell ill.

📖📖 DID YOU NOTICE? 📖📖

1. Why was Agamemnon angry with the Thebans?
2. How did Agamemnon punish the city of Thebes?
3. Why did the 'good old priest' come to see Agamemnon? What did he offer?
4. How did Agamemnon react to 'the good old man's' request? What does this suggest about him?
5. How did the god Apollo respond to the old man's prayer?
6. Myths often contain a lesson for those listening, what might the lesson be in this story?

📖 WHAT|HOW|WHY 📖

How is King Agamemnon portrayed in the story of Chryseis and her father?

By far the greatest of the Greek warriors was Achilles (A-kill-ees). He was faster and stronger than any man alive, and also very proud.

When Achilles saw the Greek soldiers dying of disease, he called a meeting of all the generals and spoke as follows, "Noble Agamemnon, though you are our leader, I must speak the truth. It was wrong to threaten the priest, a good old man who came to you with a generous offer. The gods are angry with us for what you did, and matters must be put right. You must return the lovely Chryseis to her father."

King Agamemnon was surprised to hear such words, as he was not at all used to being told what to do. "Great Achilles," he said, "Brave and strong you may be, but I am king and I shall do what I like and you shall know your place!"

To which Achilles replied, "You are too greedy! Why should all the Greeks suffer for your evil ways. I, for one, am not going to follow a leader like you into battle."

Now King Agamemnon was absolutely furious but he also understood that something must be done to appease the gods and stop the plague that was destroying his army, and so the next day he ordered a boat to take the young girl back to her father, but he also sent messengers to the tent of Achilles and ordered him hand over his own slave girl. From that moment on the pride of Achilles was so hurt that he refused to take part in the battle for Troy, but instead stayed inside his tent and sulked while the Greeks went out and fought.

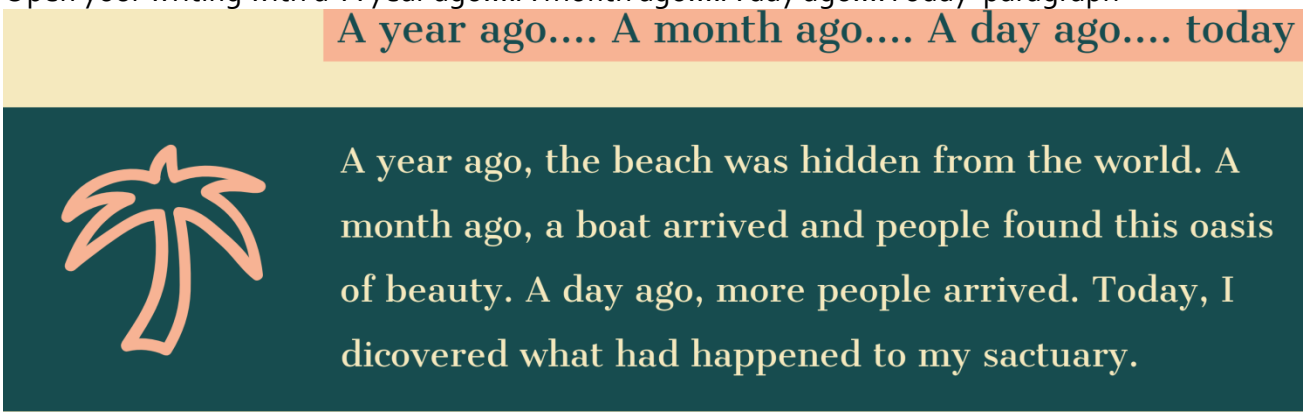
✍EXTENDED WRITING✍

Chryseis rarely gets to tell her side of the events. Write a description from her point of view of leaving King Agamemnon's camp with her father.

PLANNING POINTS:

- How does Chryseis feel about going home?
- What did she first think when she saw her father asking King Agamemnon to set her free (and his refusal)?
- What can she see, hear, feel, smell, taste as she goes through the Greek Army's camp to the boat waiting to take her home?
- What is she most looking forward to doing once she arrives home?

Open your writing with a 'A year ago….A month ago….A day ago….Today' paragraph



Source: Curtis, C. (2019) How to Teach English; Independent Thinking Press (Carmarthen)

Soon after, the Trojans opened the great doors of their city and their army marched out - like a flock of wild birds swooping back and forth and calling with screeching voices.

Now the finest warrior among the Trojans was Prince Hector. He was the brother of Paris, but he was quite different in character. Hector was brave and noble, while Paris loved fine clothes and parties and enjoyed his riches to the full.

As they rode out to battle, Hector said to his brother, "Paris, it is for your sake that thousands of brave soldiers will die today. It is only because you ran away with the Greek Queen Helen that this great army has arrived at our gates with the aim of destroying our beautiful city, killing all the men, and carrying off the women and children as slaves. It would be better had you not been born, my brother."

When he heard this, Paris felt ashamed, and to make amends he drove his chariot out in front the Trojan army and towards the enemy. In his fiercest voice, Paris called out to the Greeks to send forth their bravest warrior, and to fight him in single combat to decide the war – so that others need not suffer.

On the Greek side, King Menelaus (Menel-a-us) hated Paris more than any other man alive, so Menelaus jumped out of his chariot and said, "I will gladly fight Paris, and kill him with my spear which is made of ash wood and tipped with cruel bronze."

When Paris heard this, he was so frightened that he coiled back like a man who has seen a snake, and he shrank into the protection of his men. Great laughter arose from the Greek army, and the Trojans were furious with Prince Paris for bringing shame on them. Then Paris began to worry that if the beautiful Helen heard about his running away, she would not love him anymore. So he gathered his courage, and went out once more in front of the army, and again shouted out to the Greeks, "I call on you men to lay your swords and spears on the ground while King Menelaus and I fight one another – hero against hero."

Menelaus did not give Paris time to change his mind. He hurled his spear at him so that it broke his shield, but just missed his body. Paris fell backwards, and soon Menelaus was on him, dragging him by the plume of his helmet towards the Greek army. However, the Goddess of Love, Aphrodite, who was fond of Paris, saw what was happening and came to his aid disguised as a cloud. She scooped him into her lovely arms, and whisked him back to his Palace where the fair and fragrant Helen was waiting for him. So the Greeks and the Trojans fought each other in battle.

DID YOU NOTICE?

1. Who are Paris and Hector? How are they related?
2. Why are the Greeks at war with the Trojans?
3. How does Hector view Paris?
4. Why does Paris decide to challenge King Menelaus?
5. How did Paris survive Menelaus's attack?

According to the characteristics of a mythical hero, do you think Paris is a hero? Use evidence from the text to support your view.

Many brave soldiers were killed and wounded on both sides, but as long as Achilles refused to help the Greeks, the Trojans were stronger and drove the Greeks back to their camp. At night, a thousand camp fires glowed upon the plain, and by the light of each fire there sat fifty men while the horses chomped oats and corn beside their chariots and waited for dawn to come.

The Greeks begged the great warrior Achilles to come out and fight, but still he refused to join the battle. His best friend, Patroclus, came up with a cunning plan. He secretly put on the magnificent armour of Achilles and went out into the battle, looking exactly like the great hero. He knew that when the Greeks saw him, they would gain courage at the sight of Achilles and fight with redoubled strength, and when the Trojans saw him, they would think that the warrior they most feared had returned, and would lose heart. When the Trojans saw Patroclus dressed like Achilles, Prince Hector flew at him with his spear and killed him. Only then did he discover that it was not Achilles whom he had killed, but Patroclus.

When the mighty Achilles heard that his best friend had been killed by Hector, his anger and sorrow were great in equal measure, and he stood up before a meeting of the Greek army and said, "As you know, King Agamemnon has insulted me and I have every right not to fight in this stupid war; but now things have changed. My best friend has been killed by Prince Hector of Troy. It is for the sake of Patroclus, who was dearer to me than any other man, that I will take up the fight and avenge his death."

When the Greek army heard this, they all cheered and threw their helmets in the air, for they knew that with Achilles on their side, victory could be theirs.

When Prince Hector saw that Achilles stood once again at the head of the Greek army, he knew that there was only one thing for it. He must go out and fight Achilles, and decide the fate of Troy.

As Prince Hector was leaving for battle, he went in search of his wife, the lovely Andromache (An-drom-a-kee). He found her walking along the great walls of the city, holding their little baby in her arms. When she saw her husband, Andromache said, "Brave Hector, I beg you; do not go out today to fight Achilles. What will I do when you are gone? Think of your little son. What use is a father to him if he is dead?"

Hector replied that he could not refuse to fight, as the Greeks and the Trojans would say he was a coward.

He stretched his arms towards his child, but when boy saw the horsehair plume that nodded fiercely from his father's helmet, he was scared and cried, nursing his head into his mother's bosom.

His father and mother laughed to see him, and Hector took the helmet from his head and laid it all gleaming upon the ground. Then he took his darling child, kissed him, and dangled him in his arms, praying over him to Zeus, the king of all the gods. "Mighty Zeus," he said, "May one day people say that this child is even braver than his father, and a mightier warrior in battle, so that their praise gladdens the heart of his mother."

Hector rode out before the gates of Troy. Achilles, seeing him, started to run with all his might towards Hector, ready to hurl his spear at his hated enemy. Hector jumped from his chariot and stood firm, waiting to meet Achilles, but secretly he thought to himself, "What if I were to lay down

my shield and helmet, lean my spear against the wall and go straight up to noble Achilles? What if I were to promise to hand back Helen, who was the cause of all this war, and to let the Greeks take half of all the treasure in the city? Why argue with myself in this way? Were I to go up to him now, he would show me no mercy."

As he pondered, the swift-footed Achilles charged up to him as if he were Aries himself, the plumed God of battle. The bronze tip of Achilles' spear gleamed around him like the rays of the rising sun. Fear came over Hector and he turned and ran, while Achilles darted after him with his utmost speed. As a mountain hawk, the swiftest of birds, swoops down upon some trembling white dove - that is how Achilles made straight for Hector with all his might, while Hector fled around the city walls as fast as his legs could carry him.

Achilles chased Hector three times around the walls of Troy until at last Hector turned and fought. First Achilles threw his spear at Hector and missed. Hector then threw his spear at Achilles and hit his shield, but did not break it. They fell on each with clashing bronze swords, and Achilles, for he was the stronger hero, killed Hector.

When they heard the sad news, all the women of Troy wept for the loss of their greatest hero, but none wept more than his wife, Andromache.

Now that the finest hero of the Trojans was dead, the Greek army thought that they would soon win the war. King Priam of Troy greatly grieved the loss of his bravest son, and feared that the city would soon be defeated, but this is not how things turned out - well, not yet - for Apollo, the winged god of the silver bow, again decided to help the Trojans. One day, in the midst of battle, he came up to Prince Paris and said to him, "Hail Paris, Prince of Troy. Lift up your bow and fire an arrow into the Greek army. I will guide its point into Achilles and kill him."

When he heard this, Prince Paris replied, "Almighty Apollo, I will gladly do as you ask, but will I not just waste my arrow? Everyone knows that when Achilles was a baby, his mother dipped him in the River Styx that runs through the Underworld – and as a result, no weapon can wound him, for the waters of the River Styx make a man immortal."

Apollo replied, "Paris, you speak the truth, but the gods gave the great Achilles a choice – he could lead a short and glorious life, or a long and boring one. He chose glory and so his life must be short."

So Paris dipped his arrow in deadly poison and fired it into the air. It flew in an ark and its poisoned tip drove into Achilles' heel - for when Achilles' mother had dipped him in the river of the underworld, she had held him by his heel, and no water had touched it. Now Achilles fell from his chariot, and soon his great body lay on the ground, dead.

And that is the story of how the Greeks and the Trojans fought for nine years without either side gaining victory. Many brave warriors died on either side, and many tears were shed over lost sons and lost friends. Soon I will tell you how the war ended with a cunning trick. And Bertie is reminding me not to forget to tell you about the Wooden Horse.

Taken from: https://www.storynory.com/troy/

ZERO or HERO?

Tick each of the criteria that the three warriors meet and decide whether they are heroes or not.

Criteria	Achilles	Hector	Paris
Has Royal or Divine Parent(s)	✓✓		
Has a connection to or ability to interact with the gods			
Does heroic deeds			
Is courageous			
Goes on a journey or quest			
Acts of strength – both physical and moral			
Superhuman abilities – typically speed, strength or mental acuity.			
Defeats mythical creatures and monsters			
Unafraid of death			
Sometimes seeking glory or fame (or to prove their abilities)			
Deaths that are prophesied or foretold (and at times may seem mystical or mysterious)			
Made immortal after death in memory (of people or the gods).			
Is a Mythic Hero?			

✍✍ EXTENDED WRITING TASK✍✍

You are a resident of New Troy and to mark the 4000th anniversary of the Trojan War the government has decided to erect a statue of the most famous hero. Write a persuasive speech outlining:

- Who the greatest hero of Troy was
- Why they deserve to be remembered as a hero
- Their role in the Trojan War
- Why the other candidates are less worthy than your choice.

THE TROJAN HORSE

The Trojan Horse is one of history's most famous tricks. The Greeks, led by Odysseus, were laying siege to the city of Troy, and the war had dragged on for ten years. The Greeks were fed up with this and built a giant (hollow) wooden horse which they left outside the city gates. They then sailed their ships off the coast. The Trojans believed the horse was a peace offering and dragged the giant wooden structure into the city. Little did they know that hidden inside the horse there were thirty Greek soldiers. The soldiers waited until the middle of the night when the citizens of Troy were asleep and crept out of the horse. They slaughtered the city guards, threw open the city gates and the rest of the Greek army piled into the city. The army quickly captured the city and killed as many Trojans as they could, thus ending the war.

Achilles' Heel

A person or institution's 'Achilles Heel' is their weakness.

In Greek mythology, when Achilles was a baby, it was foretold that he would die young. To prevent his death, his mother Thetis took Achilles to the River Styx, which was supposed to offer powers of invulnerability, and dipped his body into the water. However, as Thetis held Achilles by the heel, his heel was not washed over by the water of the magical river. Achilles grew up to be a man of war who survived many great battles. One day, a poisonous arrow shot at him was lodged in his heel, killing him shortly afterwards.

The death of Achilles was not mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, but appeared in later Greek and Roman poetry and drama concerning events after the Iliad, later in the Trojan War. In the myths surrounding the war, Achilles was said to have died from a heel wound which was the result of an arrow—possibly poisoned—shot by Paris.

Did you know?

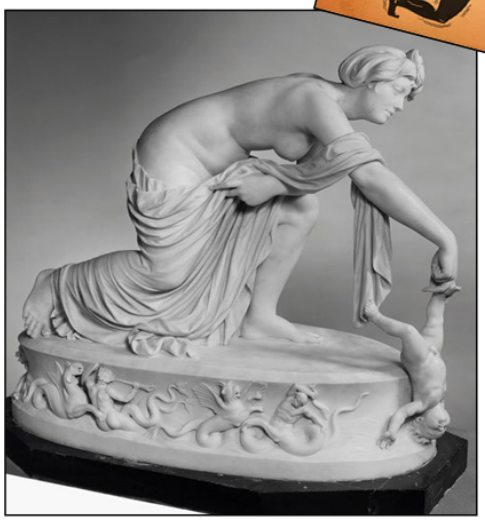
The use of "Achilles heel" as an expression meaning "area of weakness, vulnerable spot" dates only to 1840, with implied use in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Ireland, that vulnerable heel of the British Achilles!" from 1810 (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

Examples of usage:

The following newspaper headlines from 2018, all used the term 'Achilles Heel'. Can you guess what the stories were about?

- May's Magic Money Forest for the NHS exposes her Achilles Heel
- The Russian Navy's Achilles Heel is Aircraft Carriers

Discuss: Try using the term 'Achilles Heel' in a conversation with your partner.



Sculpted in 1778 by the sculptor Thomas Banks, this marble statue depicts the moment Thetis dipped her son into the river Styx.

Achilles

In Greek mythology, Achilles was a Greek hero of the Trojan War and the central character and greatest warrior of Homer's *Iliad*. His mother was the immortal Thetis, and his father, the mortal Peleus, was the king of the Myrmidons.

Achilles' most notable feat during the Trojan War was the slaying of the Trojan hero Hector outside the gates of Troy.

The Iliad

The ***Iliad*** is an ancient Greek epic poem , traditionally attributed to Homer. Set during the Trojan War, the ten-year siege of the city of Troy (Ilium) by a coalition of Greek states, it tells of the battles and events during the weeks of a quarrel between King Agamemnon and the warrior Achilles.

Achilles Tendon

A part of the human body gets its name from the Achilles Myth! The large and prominent tendon of the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles of the calf is called the *tendo achilleus* or Achilles tendon. This is commonly associated with the site of Achilles' death wound.

1 Taken from Pinkett, M; 50 Allusions

Because, But, So

Complete the following sentences:

1. Achilles died during the Trojan war **because** _____
_____
_____

2. Achilles died during the Trojan war **so** _____
_____
_____

3. Achilles died during the Trojan war, **but**_____
_____
_____

Fragments

Identify the fragment sentences by writing an 'F' after them:

1. Achilles was a noble warrior
2. Because he had been held on the heel
3. Despite the fact he was meant to be invincible

In the space below, rewrite the fragment sentences into full sentences:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Write a short paragraph describing a food that you cannot resist. Use the phrase, 'It's my Achilles' Heel' at some point.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

ACHILLES

Great Achilles. Brilliant Achilles, shining Achilles, godlike Achilles… How the epithets[1] pile up. We never called him any of those things; we called him 'the butcher'.

Swift-footed Achilles. Now there's an interesting one. More than anything else, more than brilliance, more than greatness, his speed defined him. There's a story that he once chased the god Apollo all over the plains of Troy. Cornered at last, Apollo is supposed to have said: 'you can't kill me, I'm immortal[2].' 'Ah, yes,' Achilles replied. 'But we both know if you weren't immortal, you'd be dead.'

Nobody was ever allowed the last word; not even a god.

[1]Epithet: An adjective used to describe a person's most famous quality – almost like a title.
[2]Immortal: living forever, never dying

Taken from: Barker, P (2018); The Silence of the Girls; Penguin Books (London)

WHAT|HOW|WHY

How is Achilles presented in '*The Silence of the Girls*'?

What is Achilles like in this extract?	
How do you know? Give a quotation from the text that supports this view.	
What does your example suggest about how the speaker views Achilles?	
Which word in particular makes you think this?	
Ext. Why does this fit in with what is expected from a myth/mythical character?	

✍✍**Write the next paragraph of the story.** ✍✍

The first sentence has been done for you:

I heard him before I saw him: his battle cry ringing round the walls of Lyrnessus. …

PLANNING POINTS:

- ☐ What do you feel when you think about Achilles coming to destroy your city?
- ☐ How do you react to the sounds around you?
    - What adverbs might you use to reflect this in your actions?
- ☐ How are people around you acting and feeling?
    - Can you think of some strong similes or metaphors that describe them?

WELCOME TO THE UNDERWORLD

by Michael A. Signal

In Greek mythology, the Underworld is where souls go after death. In this text, Hermes, messenger of the gods, gives readers a tour of the Underworld.
As you read, take notes on the different things that can happen to a soul in the Underworld.

Figure 2: "Fallen angels in Hell" by John Martin

Hello and welcome! I'll be your tour guide for the day. No reason to be scared — well, there is some reason to be scared. But don't worry, for I will keep you safe. Your surroundings are, no doubt, frightful. As you look around, however, I am sure you will begin to understand. You see, you are no longer in the land of the living, a world commanded by Zeus. You are now in his brother's kingdom.

Ah, it's becoming clear now. I can see the understanding beginning to dawn[1] across your face. You have passed on to the land of souls: the realm[2] of **Hades**.[3] I am here to welcome you into this realm and to guide you through it. At the end of the tour, I will escort you back to the land of the living. Welcome... to the Underworld.

Well, we're not exactly in the Underworld, not yet. First, we have to cross this river, which acts as a boundary between the living and the dead. It is called the River Styx, and we can't cross it alone. We have to wait here for the ferry.

Do you have the fare? Of course, you don't. In this world, there's a fare you have to pay in order to travel across the river. Typically, loved ones place coins in the mouth of the dead, knowing they will need the money to pay **Charon**, the ferryman of Hades. I have a coin that will allow us to board the ferry. And look, here is Charon now, wearing his long tattered[4] robe and carrying his ferryman's pole. We must give the coin to Charon before we can board his vessel.

Look there! See that figure in the distance? Yes, those are three heads. We are nearing the gates of Hades, guarded by a fierce hound named **Cerberus**. Cerberus is a massive, fearsome beast. I am sure you have heard tales of him, but seeing him in person can be intimidating.[5] He is not just a huge dog with three heads but a mixture of the Underworld's most monstrous creatures. You can see now that he has the tail of a serpent and the heads of many snakes growing from his back. I assure you, Cerberus will not harm [6]anyone unless they try to escape Hades. You see, Cerberus ensures that none but the souls of the dead enter the Underworld — unless accompanied by me! He also guards the gate so that no one can escape back into the world of the living.

Because Cerberus has allowed us safe passage through the gate, we are now in Hades. The Underworld is divided into three parts. First, there is paradise: the Elysian Fields. People earn the right to spend eternity[7] in the **Elysian Fields** through heroic feats and virtuous[8] deeds on earth. Many mortals strive to get here but, alas, only a small number of souls earn the right to spend eternity in paradise. Next, there are the **Asphodel Meadows**. It is not a land of pure delight, like the Elysian Fields. This is where people who have lived good but unremarkable lives come to stay after those lives have ended. And finally... let us move just a bit closer to the edge here. Look down. That

is the pit of **Tartarus**. You should never want a closer look than this. Tartarus is a land of pain, despair, and punishment. It is reserved for only the most despicable[9] people who have spent their lives as scoundrels, thieves, and murderers.

Who determines who is good and who deserves to be sent to Tartarus? Every Greek knows that Zeus reigns[10] over all other gods. He presides over them and the living from his home on Mt. Olympus. And his brother, Poseidon, rules the oceans. Well, there is another powerful god who rules the dead here in the Underworld. **Hades**, brother of Zeus and Poseidon, is god of the dead. He has rule over every departed soul.

For those who are deserving, Hades will reward them in the Elysian Fields. But Hades will eternally punish those who cross him or anger the gods. **Sisyphus** and **Tantalus** were crafty, deceitful kings who were sent to Tartarus for the rest of time. Sisyphus was sentenced to push a heavy boulder up a steep hill forever. Every time he is close to reaching the top of the hill, it rolls back down, and he must start the process over again. Tantalus was sentenced to stand in a pool of water that sits beneath a fruit tree. No matter how hungry or thirsty he gets, he will never be able to reach for the fruit or the water. Imagine how *tantalizing*[11] that must be!

Sorry, that was a bad joke. This is serious. Don't worry, for most humans have not been so vile and wretched in life as Sisyphus and Tantalus. Few should fear this punishment... as long as they obey the laws of Hades.

It is my job to know these things and to share with you this knowledge. I am **Hermes**, messenger of the gods and son of Zeus. I am also tasked with guiding souls to the Underworld. I hope that I have given you useful information and have answered any questions that you might have about the realm of the dead. Feel free to stop by again! After all, the Greeks believed that this would be their home for all eternity — it's not as if we are going anywhere!

"Welcome to the Underworld" by Michael A. Signal. Copyright © 2018 by CommonLit, Inc. This text is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Notes:

1. to begin to appear
2. an area ruled by someone
3. "Hades" can be used to refer to the Underworld, or the god that rules over it.
4. old or torn
5. **Intimidate** *(verb) :* to frighten someone or make them feel nervous
6. **Harm** *(verb) :* to hurt or injure
7. **Eternity** *(noun) :* time without an end
8. **Virtuous** *(adjective) :* having good moral qualities
9. **Despicable** *(adjective) :* deserving hatred and extreme criticism
10. **Reign** *(verb) :* to rule
11. **Tantalize** *(verb) :* to torment or tease someone with something out of reach

Comprehension Questions:

1. Why does the narrator think that you might be afraid?
2. How does a person enter the Underworld?
3. What determines where a departed soul goes in the Underworld?
4. What is Hades' job?
5. What does Hermes do in the Underworld?

For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which sentence describes the main idea of the text?
    A. The Underworld is a terrifying place that people spend their lives attempting to avoid.
    B. Hades and the Underworld are unfairly judged by the living, despite offering the dead a pleasant afterlife.
    C. The Underworld is a complex place, where Hades decides how the dead will spend their afterlife.
    D. Hades makes it extremely difficult for people to travel to the Underworld, as he wishes to keep his territory a secret.

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
    A. "You see, you are no longer in the land of the living, a world commanded by Zeus. You are now in his brother's kingdom." (Paragraph 1)
    B. "You see, Cerberus ensures that none but the souls of the dead enter the Underworld — unless accompanied by me!" (Paragraph 5)
    C. "That is the pit of Tartarus. You should never want a closer look than this. Tartarus is a land of pain, despair, and punishment." (Paragraph 6)
    D. "For those who are deserving, Hades will reward them in the Elysian Fields. But Hades will eternally punish those who cross him or anger the gods." (Paragraph 8)

3. PART A: Which of the following describes Hermes' attitude towards the person he is taking on a tour of the Underworld?
    A. Hermes is helpful and comforting towards the person on the tour, as he shows them the Underworld and tells them about it.
    B. Hermes is apologetic towards the person on the tour for showing them the frightening sights of monsters and Hades.
    C. Hermes is irritated towards the person on the tour, as it is clear that the individual is afraid of the Underworld.
    D. Hermes is snobby towards the person on the tour, as he knows so much more about the Underworld than the other person.

4. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
    A. "I am here to welcome you into this realm and to guide you through it. At the end of the tour, I will escort you back to the land of the living." (Paragraph 2)
    B. "Cerberus is a massive, fearsome beast. I am sure you have heard tales of him, but seeing him in person can be intimidating." (Paragraph 5)
    C. "Every Greek knows that Zeus reigns over all other gods. He presides over them and the living from his home on Mt. Olympus." (Paragraph 7)
    D. "No matter how hungry or thirsty he gets, he will never be able to reach for the fruit or the water. Imagine how tantalizing that must be!" (Paragraph 8)

5. How does a person's life in Earth affect their experiences in the Underworld?

ORPHEUS AND THE UNDERWORLD

Orpheus travelled all the way from Pimpleia to Cape Tainaron in the Peloponnese, the southernmost point of all Greece,* where could be found a cave that formed one of the entrances to the underworld.

The path from the cape sloped down, after many mazy turns, to the main gate guarded by Cerberus – the slavering, shuddering, slobbering three-headed dog, offspring† of the primordial monsters Echidna and Typhon.

At the sight of a living mortal daring to enter the halls of hell, Cerberus wagged his serpent tail and drooled in anticipation. Only the dead could pass him, and in order to dwell in peace in the Meadow of Asphodel‡ they would know to bring with them a piece of food with which to placate him. Orpheus had no sop for Cerberus other than his art. Inwardly quaking but outwardly assured, he brushed the strings of the golden lyre with his fingers and began to sing.

At the sound of the song, Cerberus – who had bunched himself up ready to bound forward and savage this presumptuous mortal – gave a whining gulp and froze in his tracks. His huge eyes rounded and he began to pant with pleasure and an inner joy that was entirely new to him. He dropped down on his haunches and curled himself on the cold stone of the gateway, like a huntsman's favourite hound dreaming by the fire after a long day in the field. Orpheus's song slowed into a gentle lullaby. Cerberus's six ears flopped down, his six eyes closed, his three tongues passed across his chops with a great slap and his three massive heads dropped into a deep and happy sleep. Even the snake of his tail drooped in peaceful slumber.

Orpheus climbed over the snoring form and, still humming his lullaby, he headed along the cold dark passageway until his progress was blocked by the black waters of the River Styx. Charon the ferryman poled his way towards him from the further bank where he had just deposited a new soul. He stretched out his hand for payment but quickly withdrew it when he saw that the young man standing before him was alive.

'Hence! Avaunt!' cried Charon in a hoarse whisper.§

In reply Orpheus strummed his lyre and began a new song, a song praising the overlooked profession of ferrymen, glorifying the unrecognised diligence and industry of one ferryman in particular – Charon, the great Charon, whose central role in the vast mystery of life and death should be celebrated the world over.

Never had Charon's ferry skimmed the cold waters of the Styx with such alacrity**. Never before had Charon, his skiff now beached, put an arm round a fare and helped them gently to disembark. And for sure, never, not in all eternity, has such a stupid, fatuous smile played over the ferryman's habitually gaunt and unrelenting features. He stood supporting himself on his pole, his adoring gaze fixed on the person of Orpheus who, with a final wave and strum of the lyre was soon swallowed up by the darkness of the passageways that led to the palace of Hades and Persephone.

---

* Now Cape Matapan

† **Offspring** (noun): child of

‡ Where ordinary (non-heroes) lived in the Underworld; heroes lived in the Elysian Fields.

§ Charon liked to use old-fashioned words like 'Avaunt', 'Nay' and 'Forsooth'. He believed they enhanced his dignity.

** **Alacrity** (noun): brisk and cheerful readiness/eagerness (pace)

On entering the palace's great hall, Orpheus found himself facing the three Judges of the Underworld, Minos, Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, enthroned in a grim semi-circle. The light of Orpheus's living spirit dazzled their eyes.

'Sacrilege! Sacrilege!'[††]

'How dare the living invade the realm of the dead?'

'Summon Thantos, lord of death, to suck the insolent soul from his body!'

Orpheus took up his lyre and before the last command could be obeyed, the three judges were smiling, nodding their head and tapping their sandaled toes in time to the intoxicating strains.

Their retinue of ghoulish servants, sentries and attendants had not heard music for so long that they could not remember how to respond to it. Some clutched at the air as if the sounds they heard were butterflies that could be caught in their hands. Some clapped, clumsily at first, but soon in time to the beat of the lyre's chords. An awkward shuffle turned into a rhythmic stamp that became a frenzied dance. Within minutes the whole chamber was alive and echoing with singing, dancing and cried of joy and laughter.

'What is the meaning of this?'

At the sight of Hades, King of the Underworld himself, and his pale consort Persephone, the hall fell into an instant and guilty silence. As in a game of musical chairs, they froze to a halt with thuds and skids. Only Orpheus appeared unmoved.

Hades curled a beckoning finger. 'If you wish to avoid an eternal punishment more excruciating than those of Ixion, Sisyphus and Tantalis combined, you had better explain yourself, mortal. What possible excuse could you have for this indecent display?'

'Not an excuse, sir, but a reason. The best and only reason.'

'A pert reply. And what is this reason?'

'Love.'

Hades replied with the barrage of bleak barks that was the closest he came to laughing.

'My wife Eurydice is here. I must have her back.'

'Must?' Persephone stared at him in disbelief. 'You dare use such a word?'

'My father Apollo –'

'We do no favours for Olympians,' said Hades. 'You are mortal and you have trespassed into the realm of the dead. That is all we need to know.'

'Perhaps my music may change your mind.'

'Music! We are immune to its charms here.'

[††] Sacrilege (noun): An action that breaks holy rules or laws (going against what god(s) has decided is right)

'I tamed Cerberus. I charmed Charon. I bewitched the Judges of the Underworld and their retinue. Are you perhaps afraid that my songs might enchant you also?'

Queen Persephone whispered briefly in her husband's ear.

Hades nodded. 'Fetch Eurydice!' he commanded. 'One song,' he said to Orpheus. 'You may sing one song. If it fails to delight, the relentless agony of your torture will be the talk and terror of the cosmos till the end of time. If your music moves us, well – we will allow you and your woman to return to the world above.'

When Eurydice's spirit floated into the hall and saw Orpheus standing so boldly before the King and Queen of the Dead, she let out a great cry of joy and wonder. Orpheus saw the shimmering form of her shade and called out to her.

'Yes, yes!' said Hades, testily. 'Most affecting. Now. Your song.'

Orpheus took up his lyre and gave a deep breath. Never had an artist asked more of their art.

The moment his hands touched the strings everyone present knew that they were going to hear something entirely new. Nimbly, Orpheus's fingertips flew up and down the strings, causing a cascade of trilling notes so quick and pure that everyone caught their breath. And now, out of the golden ripple emerged the voice. It asked everyone to think of love. Surely, even here, in the dark caverns of death, love still sat in their souls? Could they remember the first time they felt the sweeping rush of love? Love came to peasants, kings and even gods. Love made all equal. Love deified, yet love levelled.

Persephone's hand tightened around Hades' wrist as she recalled the day his chariot erupted into the meadow where she had been gathering flowers. Hades found himself thinking of the bargain he had struck with Demeter, Persephone's mother, allowing him access to his beloved for six whole months in every year.

Persephone turned to look at her husband, the man who had taken her by force but kept her by his steadfast love. Only she understood his dark moods and the honest passions that boiled within. He returned her gaze. Could that be a tear she saw welling up in his eye?

Orpheus reached the climax of his song to Eros. It wound its way along the passageways and through the chambers, galleries and hallways of hell, binding all who heard it – the servants of Hades, the emissaries of death and the souls of the departed – in a spell that took them, for as long as the music played in their ears, far away from the remorseless miseries of their endless captivity and into a kingdom of light and love.

'Your wish is granted,' boomed Hades huskily as the last notes faded away. 'Your wife may depart.'

At his words Eurydice's shade took on the substance and form of quick and breathing life. She ran into her husband's arms and they held each other tight. But a frown was forming on Hades' brow. The loss of just one dead soul tormented him. When it came to the spirits doomed to spend eternity in his kingdom, he was a hoarder, a miser of the meanest kind.

'Wait!'

The moment Eurydice had returned to flesh and blood, Orpheus had stopped playing and singing and the powerful spell of the music began to weaken its hold. It was a memory, a keen and a beautiful one, but the transcendent mood it engendered, like all the keenest pleasures, vanished like steam the moment the closing notes died away. Hades now regretted bitterly that while imprisoned in the bewitching coils of Orpheus's song he could have been so weak as to agree to Eurydice's release. How foolish he had been to give his word in front of so many witnesses. He leaned across for a whispered consultation with Persephone. Nodding, with a small smile of triumph, he kissed her cheek and pointed a finger at Orpheus.

'Let go of the woman. Turn and leave us.'

'But you said…'

'She will follow. As you make your way to the upper world, she will remain ten paces behind. But if you turn round to look at her, if you cast so much as the briefest backward glance in her direction, you will lose her. Trust, Orpheus the musician. You must show that you honour us and have faith in our word. Now go.'

Orpheus took Eurydice's face in his hands, kissed her cheek and turned to leave.

'Remember!' Persephone called after him. 'Look back for just one instant and she will be ours. No matter how many times you return, and how many songs you sing, you will have lost her for ever.'

'I won't be far behind. Have faith!' said Eurydice.

Orpheus reached the door that led to life and freedom.

'Faith!' replied Orpheus, his eyes fixed resolutely ahead of him.

And so he began to make his way along the slowly rising stone corridor and passageways. Hundreds of flitting souls acknowledged him and breathed messages of good luck as he passed. Some alarmed him by begging to be taken to the upper world with him, but Orpheus waved them away and kept resolutely to his course, upwards and ever upwards. Gates and doors opened mysteriously before him as he went.

To encourage Eurydice, but mostly to reassure himself, he called out continuously.

'Still there, my darling?'

'Still there.'

'Not tiring?'

'Always ten paces behind. Trust me.'

'So close now.'

Indeed, over the last to hundred or so paces Orpheus had become aware of a cool breeze fanning his face and fresh air filling his nostrils. Now he saw light ahead. Not the underworld's light of rush torched, pitch lamps and burning oil, but the pure light of living day. He quickened his step and pressed forward. SO close, so frantically close! In just fifteen, fourteen, twelve steps they would be free, free to live their lives again as husband and wife. Free to have children, to travel the world

together. Oh, the places they would visit. The wonders they would see. The songs and poetry and music he would compose.

The mouth of the cave opened wide as Orpheus strode on with joy and triumph in his heart. One more step – out of the shadows and into the light.

He had done it! He was out in the world, the sun was warming his face and its light was dazzling his eyes. Ten more steps forward to be sure, and now he could turn and take his beloved in his arms.

But no! No, no, no and *no*!

Orpheus had not known it, but his last twenty or so steps had accelerated into a run. Eurydice had quickened her own pace to try to match his, but when he turned round she was still too far behind, still in shadow, still in the realm of the dead.

Her eyes, filled with horror and fear, caught his for a second before the light inside her seemed to die and she was pulled back into the darkness.

With a cry of anguish Orpheus ran into the cave but she was flying away from him at tremendous speed, no longer flesh and blood but an immaterial spirit once more. Her unhappy cries echoed as Orpheus ran blindly into the blackness after her. The doors and gateways that had opened to let them leave now slammed shut in his face. He beat his fists against them until they bled, but to no avail. He could no longer hear her cries of despair, only his own.

If he had waited just two blinks of an eye before turning, they would have been united and free. Just two heartbeats.

Fry, S. (2018) *Heroes*; Penguin Books (London) (172-9)

Expanded Answers

Use the prompts to create an expanded sentence, remember to make full use of punctuation.

Cerberus fell asleep.	Who:
	When:
	Where:
	Why:

Orpheus played a special love song.	Who:
	When:
	Where:
	Why:

Orpheus left.	Who:
	When:
	Where:
	Why:

Eurydice returned to the underworld.	Who:
	When:
	Where:
	Why:

🕮 **Complete these sentence stems:**

1. **Because** Orpheus is a talented musician**,**…
2. Orpheus is a talented musician**, so**…
3. Orpheus is a talented musician**, but**…
4. **Despite** being a talented musician**,**…

ORPHEUS AND CERBERUS

Read the section where Orpheus encounters Cerberus and consider how this story could be retold from Orpheus's perspective.

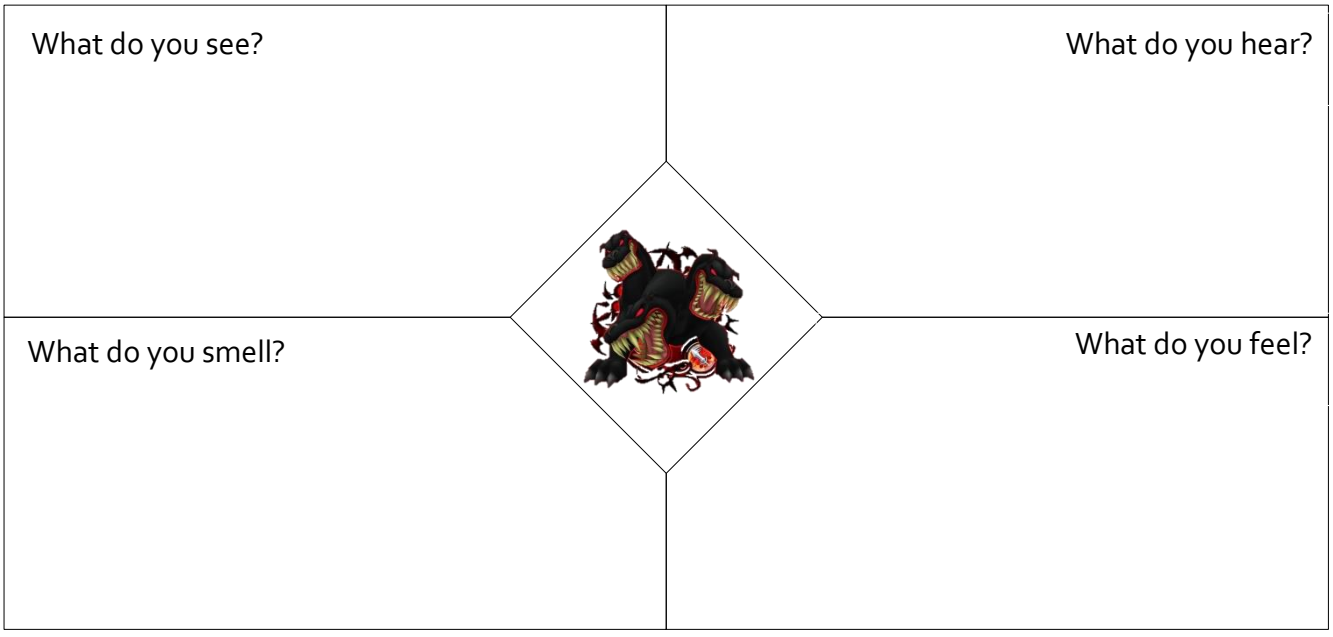
The path from the cape sloped down, after many mazy turns, to the main gate guarded by Cerberus – the slavering, shuddering, slobbering three-headed dog, offspring[7] of the primordial monsters Echidna and Typhon.

At the sight of a living mortal daring to enter the halls of hell, Cerberus wagged his serpent tail and drooled in anticipation. Only the dead could pass him, and in order to dwell in peace in the Meadow of Asphodel[8] they would know to bring with them a piece of food with which to placate him. Orpheus had no sop for Cerberus other than his art. Inwardly quaking but outwardly assured, he brushed the strings of the golden lyre with his fingers and began to sing.

At the sound of the song, Cerberus – who had bunched himself up ready to bound forward and savage this presumptuous mortal – gave a whining gulp and froze in his tracks. His huge eyes rounded and he began to pant with pleasure and an inner joy that was entirely new to him. He dropped down on his haunches and curled himself on the cold stone of the gateway, like a huntsman's favourite hound dreaming by the fire after a long day in the field. Orpheus's song slowed into a gentle lullaby. Cerberus's six ears flopped down, his six eyes closed, his three tongues passed across his chops with a great slap and his three massive heads dropped into a deep and happy sleep. Even the snake of his tail drooped in peaceful slumber.

Orpheus climbed over the snoring form and, still humming his lullaby, he headed along the cold dark passageway until his progress was blocked by the black waters of the River Styx.

Fry, S. (2018) *Heroes*; Penguin Books (London) (172)

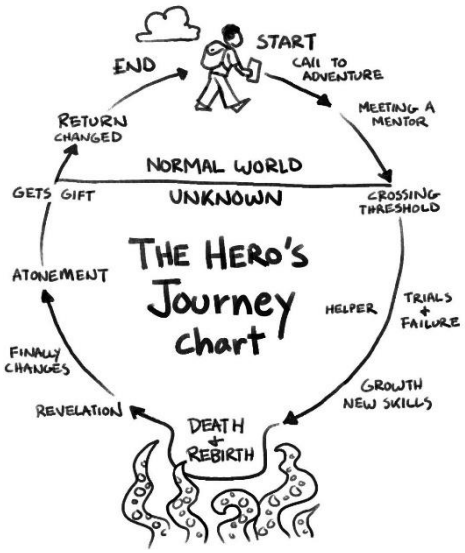


[7] **Offspring** (noun): child of

[8] Where ordinary (non-heroes) lived in the Underword; heroes lived in the Elysian Fields.

The HERO'S JOURNEY

IN 1949, American mythological researcher Joseph Campbell wrote a famous book entitled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* in which he identified common patterns running through hero myths and stories from around the world. Campbell outlines several basic stages that almost every hero-quest goes through (no matter the culture of origin) which he called "the monomyth."



1. **The Ordinary World** – The hero exists in a world that is considered ordinary or uneventful by its inhabitants. The hero is often considered odd by those in the ordinary world and possesses some ability or characteristic that makes them feel out of place.
2. **The Call to Adventure** – The hero is called away from the ordinary world— usually by discovery, event, or danger. They may be reluctant to leave the ordinary world but ultimately accept their destiny in the end.
3. **Refusal of the Quest** – During *the Call to Adventure*, the hero is given a quest which only they can complete. They are given the choice to accept or deny it but refusing the quest only brings trouble.
4. **Accepting the Call** – Once the adventure is accepted, the hero advances into the next stage of their journey.
5. **Entering the Unknown** – The hero enters an unknown world— sometimes filled with supernatural creatures, breath-taking sights, and the constant threat of death. Unlike the hero's home, this outside world has its own rules and they learn quickly to respect these rules as they are tested again and again.
6. **Supernatural Aid** – A hero is almost always started on their journey by a character who has mastered the laws of the outside world and shares this wisdom— it is something the hero needs to succeed.
7. **Talisman** – This special item will assist the hero on their quest.
8. **Allies/Helpers** - Every hero needs allies and helpers; without these the hero would fail.
9. **Tests and the Supreme Ordeal** – A series of tests and obstacles will strengthen the hero and prepare them for the final showdown.
10. **Reward and the Journey Home** – A reward is given to the hero for passing the *Supreme Ordeal* and for their endurance and strength. After they obtain the reward, all that is left is for the hero to return home.
11. **Master of Two Worlds/Restoring the World** – Success on the hero's quest is life-changing. By achieving victory, they have changed their original world. The hero has also grown in spirit and strength.

Source: http://www.bte.org/curious-heros-journey

THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

by E2BN.org

In ancient Greece, people told myths to explain the ways of the world. Myths often portrayed brave heroes and vicious monsters. The ancient Greeks also believed in powerful gods who watched over Earth and intervened when they saw fit. In this particular myth, a prince from Greece's capital city of Athens travels by sea to another city, Crete, in order to fight a monster.

As you read, take notes on how Theseus' actions and characteristics help drive the plot.

King Minos of Crete was a powerful man, feared by the rulers of the lands around him. When he demanded goods or men for his great armies, they felt they had to agree. When he demanded they send tributes[9] to honour him, they sent them without question. It was the only way they could stop him going to war with them. But his demands on Athens became too much for them to bear.

King Minos had a great palace built for himself. Inside this palace, Minos had built a giant maze, a labyrinth, and, at the centre of the maze, he kept a terrifying creature – the Minotaur. Now this was no ordinary animal; it was a monster, half man and half bull.

It was powerful and savage,[10] and it loved to eat the flesh of the humans who had been shut into the labyrinth by King Minos. They would wander through the maze, completely lost, until at last they came face to face with the Minotaur. Not a great way to die, really.

As for Athens, Minos demanded that every year King Aegeus of Athens send him seven young men and seven young women.

"Why do we send these young people to Crete every year?" Theseus, the King's son, asked his father. "And why is it that none of them ever return?"

"Because if we did not send them, Minos would wage war on us and it is a war that we would not win," said King Aegeus. "And they do not return because they do not go to Crete as slaves. They go as food for the Minotaur."

"Father, this is terrible," shouted Theseus, "we cannot let this go on. We cannot sacrifice any more of our young citizens to this tyrant. When it is time to send the next tribute, I will go as one of them and I vow that it is the last time the Minotaur will be fed with the flesh of any of our people."

Try as he might, his father could not persuade him to change his mind. Aegeus reminded him that every year, other young men had sworn to slay this terrible beast and they had never been seen again.

Theseus insisted that he understood the dangers but would succeed. "I will return to you, father," cried Theseus, as the ship left the harbour wall, "and you will be proud of your son."

"Then I wish you good luck, my son," cried his father, "I shall keep watch for you every day. If you are successful, take down these black sails and replace them with white ones. That way I will know you are coming home safe to me."

As the ship docked in Crete, King Minos himself came down to inspect the prisoners from Athens. He enjoyed the chance to taunt the Athenians and to humiliate[11] them even further.

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[9] In this context, a tribute is a payment made by one state or ruler to another, especially as the price of peace, security, protection or to recognize authority

[10] **Savage** *(adjective) :* fierce, violent, or uncontrolled

[11] **Humiliate** *(verb) :* to make someone feel ashamed or foolish

"Is this all your king has to offer this year?" he jeered. "Such puny[12] creatures. Hardly even a snack for the mighty creature within the labyrinth. Anyway, let's get on with it. I am not a hard-hearted man, so I will let you choose which one goes first into the Minotaur's den. Who is it to be?"

Theseus stepped forward.

"I will go first. I am Theseus, Prince of Athens and I do not fear what is within the walls of your maze."

"Those are brave words for one so young and so feeble.[13] But the Minotaur will soon have you between its horns. Guards, open the labyrinth and send him in."

Standing behind the king, listening, was his daughter, Ariadne. From the moment she set eyes on Theseus, Ariadne fell in love with him. As she listened to her father goading[14] and taunting the young prince, she decided that she would help him. As he entered the labyrinth and the guards walked away, she called softly to him.

"Theseus, take this," she whispered. "Even if you kill the Minotaur, you will never find your way out again."

She threw him a great ball of string and he tied one end of it to the entrance. He smiled at her, turned and began to make his way into the maze, the string playing out behind him as he went.

Theseus walked carefully through the dark, foul-smelling passages of the labyrinth, expecting at any moment to come face-to-face with the creature. He did not have long to wait. Turning a corner, with his hands held out in front of him feeling his way, he suddenly touched what felt like a huge bony horn.

In an instant his world turned upside-down, quite literally. He was picked up between the Minotaur's horns and tossed high into the air. When he landed on the hard cold stone, he felt the animal's huge hooves come down on his chest. Every last breath seemed to be knocked out of him and he struggled to stay alive in the darkness.

But Theseus was no ordinary man. He was the son of the King, he was brave and he was stubborn. As the Minotaur bellowed[15] in his ear and grabbed at him with its hairy arms, Theseus found a strength which he did not know he possessed.

He grabbed the animal's huge horns, and kept on twisting the great head from side to side. As the animal grew weak, Theseus gave one almighty tug on the head, turning it almost right around. The creature's neck snapped, it gurgled its last breath and fell to the floor with an enormous thud.

It was over, he had done it. The Minotaur was dead. All he had to do was make his way out of… and then he realised the awful truth. In the struggle, he had let go of the string, his lifeline. Theseus felt all over the floor in the pitch darkness and kept thinking he had found it, only to realise that all he had was a long wiry hair from the Minotaur.

Despair[16] set in and Theseus wondered if this was where his life would end, down in the dark, all alone, next to the stinking body. Then, his hand brushed a piece of string and, with a whoop of delight, he knew he had found the thread which would lead him back out. As he neared the entrance of the labyrinth, the darkness began to fade and he made out the figure of Ariadne, waiting for his return.

"You must take me back to Athens with you," she cried, "My father will kill me when he finds out that I have helped you."

"But of course you must come with us," said Theseus, "it would be cruel to leave you here." Quickly and quietly, they unfurled[17] the great black sails of their ship and headed for home.

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[12] **Puny** *(adjective) :* small and weak

[13] **Feeble** *(adjective) :* lacking physical strength, especially due to age or illness

[14] **Goad** *(verb) :* to provoke or annoy in order to create a reaction

[15] **Bellow** *(verb) :* to shout in a loud or deep voice

[16] **Despair** *(noun) :* a feeling that everything is wrong and nothing will get better

[17] **Unfurl** (*verb*) to open something, like a flag, so that it is spread out

"I cannot believe how my life has changed," said Ariadne, as they sailed across the calm seas towards Athens. "To think that I am free of my cruel father and that I will soon be married to a great prince."

"Married?" said Theseus, "Oh, yes, that will be… er… wonderful." But in truth, Theseus did not really find her attractive.

So, when their ship docked at an island on their way home, to collect fresh water, Theseus sent Ariadne off to find bread and fruit. The moment she was gone, he set sail and left her on the island. Now, you might think that this was a bad way to reward someone who had helped him and had saved him from certain death.

The Gods clearly thought the same thing, for they had a further horror in store for him, as a punishment for his ungrateful treatment of the young girl.

In his haste[18] to get away, Theseus forgot to change his sails to white. King Aegeus, waiting on the headland, saw the ship approaching with its black sails flying in the wind.

"My son has failed and he is dead," he cried. And in despair, he flung himself from the cliff into the raging waters below. From that day on, the sea was named in memory of Theseus' father, and to this day, it is known as the Aegean Sea.

"Theseus and the Minotaur", © 2006, East of England Broadband Network. Reprinted with permission, all rights reserved.

1. What is the major conflict between King Minos and Athens? a) King Minos threatens to go to war with Athens if Athens won't send him human sacrifices. b) Athens sends King Minos slaves as payment for losing a war to them. c) King Minos demands food for his Minotaur or he'll set the minotaur lose in Athens. d) King Minos wants to rule Athens but does not have a strong enough army to defeat the city.	**2. What does Theseus plan to do?** a) sacrifice himself so Minos won't demand any more Athenians b) overthrow King Minos and take Crete for Athens c) kill King Minos d) kill the minotaur
3. How does Ariadne impact Theseus? a) She provides him with a way to kill the minotaur. b) She provides him with directions for how to get through the maze. c) She gives him the tools needed to get out of the maze. d) She gives him hope by telling him she loves him.	4. **During Theseus' battle with the minotaur…** a) he is killed by the beast. b) he tires the creature out until he can kill it. c) he taunts the beast with Ariadne's ball of string. d) he outsmarts the creature into killing itself.
5. How does Theseus respond to Ariadne's help in the maze? a) He brings her home to Athens and marries her. b) He sends her back to her cruel father. c) He abandons her so he doesn't have to marry her. d) He marries her to a member of his crew and leaves them on an island.	**6. How do the gods punish Theseus?** a) by wrecking his ship in a storm and drowning him b) by letting the king think Theseus' ship was an enemy ship to be attacked c) by ensuring the king killed himself when Theseus failed to raise white sails d) by making Theseus king of a failing kingdom

Orpheus in the Underworld	Hero's Journey	Theseus and the Minotaur

[18] **Haste** *(noun) :* speed or hurry, often made with urgency

	The Call to Adventure The hero receives a challenge that will take them away from their ordinary life, for example, a quest to follow or a dangerous mission to complete.	
	Into the unknown The hero sets out on their adventure, entering a new world filled with dangers.	
	Trials and Tests On the path to their final goal, the hero encounters difficult obstacles that they have to overcome.	
	The final challenge The hero faces their greatest challenge ad must endure an ordeal to achieve the aim of their adventure.	
	Reward and Return The hero receives some form of reward and returns to their home a changed person.	

Our task this unit will be to write a section of a myth. Use this grid to collect together some ideas for the whole myth before you select which section you will focus on.	1. The Call to Adventure	2. Into the Unknown
3. Trials and Tests	4. The Final Challenge	5. Reward and Return

Part Two: Legends

Legends

A **legend** (/ˈlejənd/) is a story about human events or actions that has not been proved nor documented in real history. Legends are retold as if they are real events and were believed to be historical accounts. They usually tell stories about things that could be possible, so both the storyteller and the audience may believe they are true. Its meaning stems from the Medieval Latin term *legenda*, meaning "things to be read." and from the Latin *legendus*.

The details in legends are altered and adapted over time so that they stay interesting for audiences—for instance, the legend of the Philosopher's Stone (a magical stone that can make a person immortal and turn metals into gold) can be found in literature in the Middle Ages to the modern day *Harry Potter* series. Legends don't claim to be exact retellings of events, so they are neither wholly believed nor wholly doubted by the audience *or* the author.

Sometimes, it's hard to say whether a legend is fiction or nonfiction—the truth behind it can be unclear. For example, the legends of the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot are based on real sightings, but their existence remains unproved today. Conversely, an **urban legend** is a fictional story in popular culture that is known to be false; for example, a rumour passed on year after year to each new group of freshmen about an old janitor who used to murder students at the local high school.

As stories, mankind has and always will love legends—they are an intriguing form of storytelling because we want to believe that they are true. They are an essential part of oral and written folklore; they are found in **folktales** from all cultures. It is part of our nature to share interesting and significant tales with friends and future generations so that they can be recorded and remembered. As much as people like to tell stories, they like to exaggerate even more, which is why legends are so timeless—their facts have been embellished and changed so many times that the truth becomes a mystery that still might need to be solved, and that makes them particularly intriguing. So long as we continue to pass down interesting stories, legends will continue to exist and flourish.

Source: https://literaryterms.net/legend/

True or False?

	T	F
1. Legends are like myths, except they are historically true.	☐	☐
2. Legends can be found in literature all through to our day.	☐	☐
3. Urban Legends are legends set in cities.	☐	☐
4. Legends originally were not written down, but told as stories through generations.	☐	☐
5. Legends are often added to, or embellished.	☐	☐
6. Legends are popular because people want to believe they are true.	☐	☐

BEOWULF

The Cultural Background

Beowulf, a poem of 3,182 lines, is the longest surviving poem in Old English. It is also the first important example of poetry in a European language that is not Greek or Latin, and is the only complete example of Germanic folk epic that exists.

A few historical references in *Beowulf* are from the sixth century, but the version of the poem that we have now was probably composed between 700 and 750. We do not know the name of the author, but it is thought that it was composed by just one person. Like other early poetry, *Beowulf* was first told orally and passed on from poet to poet over a long time before finally being written down. In Beowulf there are some references to the Anglo-Saxon poet – called Scop (pronounced 'shop') in Old English – who gave oral performance of poems, usually by singing them, on special occasions. The first written version of *Beowulf* is a manuscript* from about 1000, which can now be seen in the British Museum in London.

The events of the poem are set in southern Scandinavia, and are mostly a mixture of Germanic myth and legend, although there are a few historical references. The main values of the poem are loyalty to chief and tribe and revenge on enemies, although there are also some comments from a Christian point of view.

Beowulf, like nearly all Germanic and Old English poetry, uses alliteration. This means that the sounds of consonants – especially at the beginning of word – are repeated in words that are near each other: e.g. *They put his **b**ody on the **b**oat and then **b**egan to **b**urn it.*

English poetry only started to use rhyme – in which the last syllables of words have the same sounds – after the Norman invasion of 1066, when French styles of poetry were introduced into England.

Source: Emma Berridge, Robert Hill (ed.) (2002) Reading and Training: Beowulf; Black Cat (Canterbury) p9,10

***manuscript (n):** an old example of a book or piece of writing, written by hand.

Make a fact file about *Beowulf* including the information to answer the clues below:

1. Three reasons why it is famous
2. When it was composed
3. Why it was not written down at first
4. When it was written down
5. Name of the poet
6. Where the events are set
7. Main values found in the poem
8. Most important element of style
9. Where the manuscript is kept

Grendel and his mother, the Water Witch, terrorise the community and Hrothgar turns to Beowulf to rid them of the monsters. When Beowulf asks where they live, Hrothgar describes their home in a nearby lake:

"They live in secret places, windy
Cliffs, wolf-dens where water pours
From the rocks, then runs underground where mist
Streams like black clouds, and the groves of trees
Growing out over their lake are all covered
With frozen spray, and wind down snakelike
Roots that reach as far as the water
And help keep it dark. At night that lake
Burns like a torch. No one knows its bottom,
No wisdom reaches such depths. A deer,
Hunted through the woods by packs of hounds,
A stag with great horns, though driven through the forest
From faraway places, prefers to die
On those shores, refuses to save its life
In that water…."

📖✍ **The Setting** ✍📖

Draw the lake where Grendel and his mother live.

Using the text and your drawing, write a description of the lake and Beowulf's journey to fight Grendel's mother.

Beowulf fights Grendel's Mother

He leaped into the lake, would not wait for anyone's
Answer; the heaving water covered him
Over. For hours he sank through the waves;
At last he saw the mud of the bottom.
And all at once the greedy she-wolf
Who'd ruled those waters for half a hundred
Years discovered him, saw that a creature
From above had come to explore the bottom
Of her wet world. She welcomed him in her claws,
Clutched at him savagely but could not harm him,
Tried to work her fingers through the tight
Ring-woven mail on his breast, but tore
And scratched in vain. Then she carried him, armour
And sword and all, to her home; he struggled
To free his weapon and failed. The fight
Brought other monsters swimming to see
Her catch, a host of sea beasts who beat at
His mail shirt, stabbing with tusks and teeth
as they followed along. Then he realized, suddenly,
That she'd brought him into someone's battle-hall,
And there the water's heat could not hurt him,
Nor anything in the lake attack him through
The building's high-arching roof. A brilliant
Light burned all around him, the lake
Itself life a fiery flame.
Then he saw
The mighty water witch, and swung his sword,
His ring-marked blade, straight at her head;
The iron sang its fierce song,
Sang Beowulf's strength. But he guest
Discovered that no sword could slice her evil
Skin, that Hrunting could not hurt her, was useless
Now when he needed it, they wrestled, she ripped
And tore and clawed at him, bit holes in his helmet,
And that too failed him; for the first time in years
Of being worn to war it would earn him no glory;
It was the last time anyone would wear it. But Beowulf
Longed only for fame, leaped back
Into battle. He tossed his sword aside,
Angry; the steel-edged blade lay where
He'd dropped it. If weapons were useless he'd use
His hands, the strength in his fingers, so fame
Comes to the men who mean to win it
And care about nothing else! He raised
His arms and seized her by the shoulder; anger

Doubled his strength, he threw her to the floor.
She fell, Grendel's fierce mother, and the Geats'
Proud prince was ready to leap on her. But she rose
At once and repaid him with her clutching claws,
Wildly tearing at him. He was weary, that best
And strongest of soldiers; his feet stumbled
And in an instant she had him down, held helpless.
Squatting with her weight on his stomach, she drew
A dagger, brown with dried blood, and prepared
To avenge her only son. But he was stretched
On his back, and her stabbing blade was blunted
by the woven mail shirt he core on his chest.
The hammered links held; the point
Could not touch him, he's have travelled to the bottom of the earth,
Edgetho's son, and died there, if that shining
Woven metal had not helped – and Holy
God, who sent him victory, gave judgment
For truth and right, ruler of the heavens,
Once Beowulf was back on his feet and fighting.

Then he saw, hanging on the wall, a heavy
Sword, hammered by giants, strong
And blessed with their magic, the best of all weapons
But so massive that no ordinary man could lift
Its carved and decorated length. He drew it
From its scabbard, broke the chain on its hilt,
And then, savage, now, angry
And desperate, lifted it high over his head
And struck with all the strength he had left,
Caught her in the neck and cut it through,
Broke bones and all. Her body fell
To the floor, lifeless, the sword was wet
with her blood, and Beowulf rejoiced at the sight.

📖Storyboard📖

Create a storyboard to outline the battle between Beowulf and Grendel's mother.

Use your storyboard to create a recount from Beowulf's point

The Legend of King Arthur

King Arthur was a fictional British leader from the late 5th and early 6th centuries, known as the ruler of Camelot, who has become legendary due to the folklore surrounding his history. King Arthur was described in the *History of the Britons* by Ninnius in 830 as a British General who fought 12 battles and killed 980 men. This was the beginning of his legend, and no proof exists to support he ever existed in anything other than folklore, although this is still debated by scholars today. King Arthur has become legendary along with the other characters of Camelot including his wife Guinevere, Sir Lancelot, and the Knights of the Round Table.

Interesting King Arthur Facts:

- King Arthur is a mythological king said to have been the ruler of Britain during the medieval period.
- King Arthur's parents were Igraine the Duchess of Cornwall, and King Uther Pendragon.
- King Arthur's nickname was The One, True King of the Britons.
- The legend of King Arthur contains many variations. His beginnings are fairly similar in most stories, stating that he was born out of wedlock to the King of Britain, and was only able to succeed the throne by proving himself with an unusual demonstration of strength. He pulled a sword from a stone.
- Some scholars believe that King Arthur's name is derived from a Roman name Astorius, while others believe it is Celtic in origin - derived from the word Art-rig meaning Bear King.
- The kingdom that King Arthur ruled was called Camelot. The legend of Camelot was not introduced until the end of the 1100s, when a poet DeTroyes added Camelot to the legend.
- King Arthur married Lady Guinevere but she later betrayed him when she fell in love with Sir Lancelot - King Arthur's first knight. Legend states that she later married Sir Mordred, King Arthur's nephew and a traitor.
- Legend states that King Arthur kept Sir Lancelot's castle besieged for several months and eventually the two came to an agreement. King Arthur got his wife back and Sir Lancelot had to leave and go to France.
- King Arthur followed Sir Lancelot to France because he still wanted revenge, and while he was away his nephew Sir Mordred married Queen Guinevere, forcing King Arthur to return.
- In the battle that followed King Arthur was fatally wounded.
- Legend states that King Arthur was taken to Avalon by the Three Fairies to cure his wounds. He will be awakened one day to once again defend Britain.
- King Arthur's sword was called Excalibur.
- Some believe that King Arthur and Queen Guinevere are buried in Glastonbury Abbey in Glastonbury, England.
- The Knights of the Round Table lived in King Arthur's castle Camelot. The knights had to uphold a Code of Chivalry, which was a set of rules, in order to be part of the Round Table.
- The Knights of the Round Table included King Arthur, Lancelot, Gawain, Geraint, Percival, Bors the Younger, Lamorak, Kay, Gareth, Bedivere, Gaheris. Galahad, and Tristan. There are many other knights listed with legends giving different numbers ranging from 12 to more than 150.

Source: http://www.softschools.com/facts/fiction/king_arthur_facts/2351/

The Knights' Code of Chivalry

A knight was expected to have not only the strength and skills to face combat in the Middle Ages but was also expected to temper this aggressive side of a warrior with a chivalrous side to his nature. There was one single Code of Chivalry - it was a moral system which went beyond rules of combat and introduced the concept of "Chivalrous conduct" or the qualities idealized by knighthood, such as bravery, courtesy, honour, and gallantry toward women. The Song of Roland was the most famous 'chanson de geste' (songs of heroic deeds) of the Middle Ages and was composed between 1098- 1100 A.D. It describes the betrayal of Count Roland at the hand of Ganelon (his step-father), and his resulting death in the Pyrenees Mountains at the hands of the Saracens (people who lived in the deserts of the Middle East). Roland was a loyal defender of the king and his code of conduct is a description of the meaning of chivalry:

- To fear God and maintain His Church
- To serve the liege* lord in valour and faith
- To protect the weak and the meek
- To give succour (aid) to widows and orphans
- To refrain from the wanton giving of offence
- To live by honour and for glory
- To despise pecuniary (monetary) reward
- To fight for the welfare of all
- To obey those placed in authority
- To guard the honour of fellow knights
- To eschew (avoid) unfairness, meanness and deceit
- To keep faith
- At all times to speak the truth
- To persevere to the end in any enterprise begun
- To respect the honour of women
- Never to refuse a challenge from an equal
- Never to turn the back upon a foe

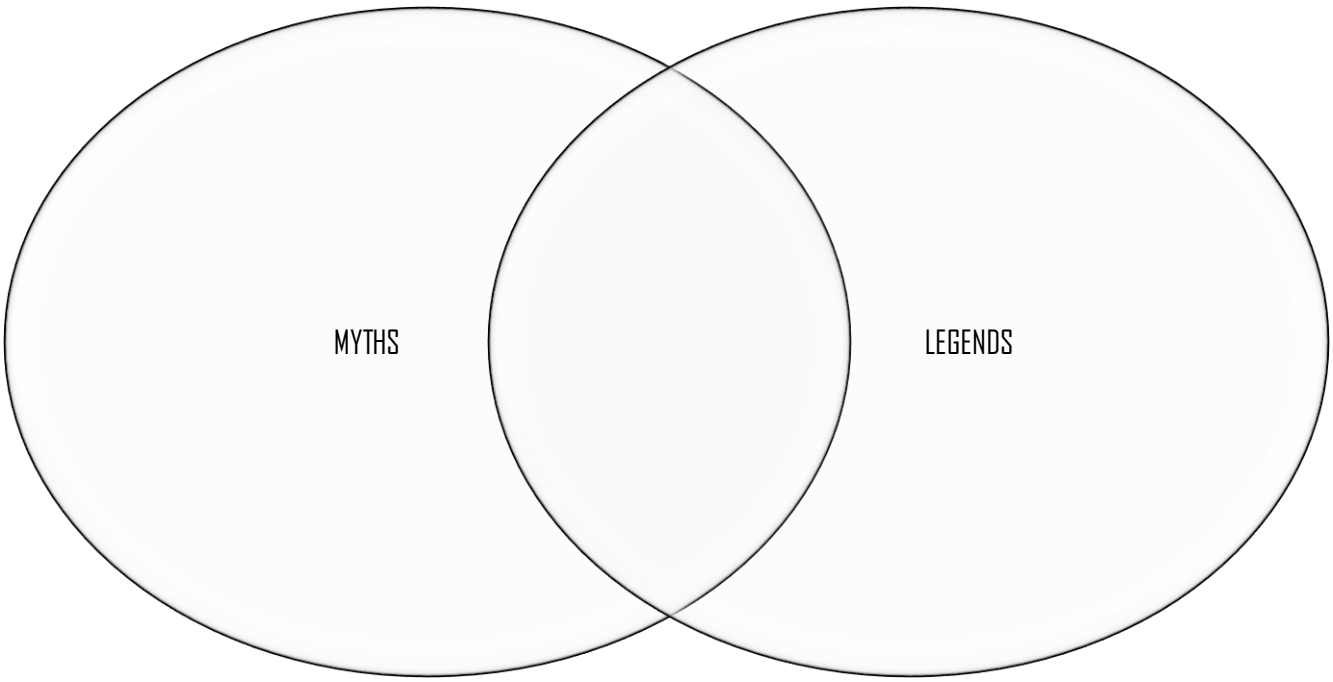
*A lord or sovereign to whom allegiance and service are due according to feudal law

📖 **The Code of Chivalry** 📖

- Why do you think knights had a code of chivalry?
- Do you think this code of chivalry is still applicable today?
- If you were to write a new code for our day, what would you call it? What would you include in the expectations?

Myth vs Legend

Myth	Legend
A myth is a story from a long time ago. Some myths are thousands of years old.	Legends are old stories, which have a little bit of truth in them. They might be based on a real event, place, person or a true face from long ago, which got exaggerated over the years
In Greek, the word 'mythos' means 'story'.	
There are myths from every culture in the world, but the best known ones are from Ancient Greece, Rome or from the Norse people of Northern Europe	Some legends are famous all over the world – like the legends of king Arthur – but some are only well known in the local towns or areas they come from.
Myths usually have heroes or heroines who are gods of people with amazing strength or super powers	The heroes and heroines in legends aren't gods, but they are courageous, strong or clever. Sometimes all three!
The hero or heroine often has to go on a journey to outwit or do battle with the frightening beast or monster	Like in myths, legends tell you how a hero or heroine solves a problem or beats the bad guy. Not all legends have monsters or beasts in them.
Gods and monsters are the two main ingredients of many myths	There are often magical people or beasts in legends, such as wizards, witches, fairies, giants, mermaids, dragons or knights – these can be bad or good.
Some myths try to explain how the universe or natural world was created. These are called 'creation myths' or 'nature myths'.	



Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Long ago, in a place called Camelot, the great King Arthur was celebrating Christmas. Sharing the King's celebrations were the Knights of the Round Table, the most honourable men in all the lands. They were known far and wide for their bravery and courage. The youngest of these knights was Arthur's own nephew, Sir Gawain.

During the feast, as the king raised his cup he wished aloud that they might have some wonderful mystery or adventure. Before he had time to put his cup back on the table, the knights all gasped in astonishment as there rode into the hall the strangest man they had ever seen. The visitor was extremely tall and his face was fierce. His red eyes glowered from beneath great bristly eyebrows and over his broad chest hung a green beard, as big as a bush. His coat, hood and trousers were green as was his horse. In one hand he held a green holly bough and in the other, a huge razor sharp axe. The axe handle was richly decorated in gold and green. The knights were dumbfounded. The king invited the stranger to join them at the table but he replied that he had not come to feast but to prove, once and for all, the courage of the famous knights before him.

"If it is battle you seek," replied the king, "I will gladly accept your invitation."

"No Sire," said the Green Knight, "I come not to fight but to challenge. I want to know if any man here is bold enough to fetch one blow at me with this axe, on condition that, in a year and a day, he shall stand a blow from my hand." All the knights were silent; no one cared to offer him an exchange of blows. The Green Knight looked scornfully around those assembled. Stung by shame, the King cried out that he would take up the challenge.

The Green Knight sprang from his horse and put the axe in Arthur's hand but the Knights pulled him away saying it was no adventure for a king. "Give me the chance," begged Sir Gawain. The young man was keen to help his king. The others backed him and, reluctantly, Arthur withdrew his challenge.

"Nephew," said the king, "take care that you put all your heart and strength in the stroke, so he can never repay you." The Green Knight smiled grimly. "It suits me well," he said, "to take a blow from thee, but first you must swear that you will seek me out in twelve months and a day, so I can give back what I received from you." Sir Gawain gave his word and the giant pulled loose his hood and pushed aside his hair to expose his neck. Stroking his great beard he awaited, unconcerned, what was to come.

The young man grasped the heavy axe, heaved it high and delivered it with all the strength of his arm. Down came the razor sharp axe on the brawny neck, sheering through skin and bone so the heavy head fell to the floor. But the giant stood firm and, without flinching, picked up his head and sprang on his horse. The king gasped in amazement, the queen screamed and the knights fell into a stunned silence. As he rode from the hall, head in his hands, his eyes fixed themselves on Sir Gawain. "I have thy word," he said. "Do not fail to seek me out; you will find me at the Green Chapel."

3 Sir Gawain strikes his blow; 15th century manuscript. SOURCE: https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/sir-gawain-and-the-green-knight

After a year has passed Sir Gawain went in search of the Green Chapel, he climbed many a hill and crossed many a marsh and river; he battled bears, wolves and serpents but kept travelling. It was a harsh winter and the brave knight often had to sleep in the open, pelted by sleet and rain. He stopped regularly to ask after the Green Knight but none had heard of such a man. Finally, on Christmas Eve, he found himself lost in a great mossy forest. He prayed that he may be guided to a place to rest. As he opened his eyes he saw, in the glow of the setting sun, a noble castle on a distant hill. Spurring on his weary horse, he galloped towards the fortress. The lord of the castle met Sir Gawain with a hearty welcome. Sir Gawain was shown to a beautiful chamber full of rich tapestries. After he had dressed in his best attire, he joined the Christmas gathering. At the table was the lord, his beautiful lady, many knights and dames and, at the far end of the table, sat a wrinkled old crone.

For three days he enjoyed the festivities. Then he went to his host to say his farewells. He explained he must be on his way for he needed to find a place known as the Green Chapel. His host, however, assured him it was near at hand. Gawain was pleased to hear his journey was nearly at an end and readily agreed to stay for a further three days.

During the next three days, the lady of the castle who had grown to like Sir Gawain offered him her green silk scarf. When he refused, she said, "My knight, you must face many foes. This is a magic scarf; it has the power to protect whoever wears it against any weapon." So he accepted the gift. He spent the rest of the day in the company of the old crone. But he felt uneasy, it was as if her eyes could see right through him. Gawain's heart was heavy, for the time was drawing near when he must leave the castle. He slept ill that night. As the cock's crow heralded the new day, he dressed carefully, taking care to wrap around him the green scarf. He waved goodbye to his host and set out in into the dark stormy morning. A bitter wind took his breath away. A servant had been provided to guide his way. Together they went by rugged cliffs and dark moor.

Eventually he came to a crag and saw in front of him the overgrown mouth of a dark cave. He tethered his horse to a tree and went inside. Immediately, there was a fearful clattering of rock and standing in front of the young man was the huge figure of the Green Knight bearing an axe - his hairy head firmly back on his shoulders.

"Welcome to my home, you have timed your travels well," said the Green Knight. "Now prepare to make good our bargain." Sir Gawain bravely removed his helmet and bent forward but, as the axe was raised, he could not help but flinch.

"Ha," said the Green Knight, "he flinches before he is hurt."

"When my head comes off I cannot put it back," said Gawain. "But I gave my word and will not flinch again."

Once more the giant brandished the axe.

"Strike and be done," said Gawain.

"Have patience," jeered the Giant and he heaved the heavy axe up into the air. This time the knight did not flinch or cry out as the sharp axe whistled through the air and onto his neck splitting the skin.

It was a few moments before a stunned Gawain realised that, apart from a few drops blood, he was unharmed. He turned to see, leaning on his axe, not the Green Knight but the Lord of the Castle.

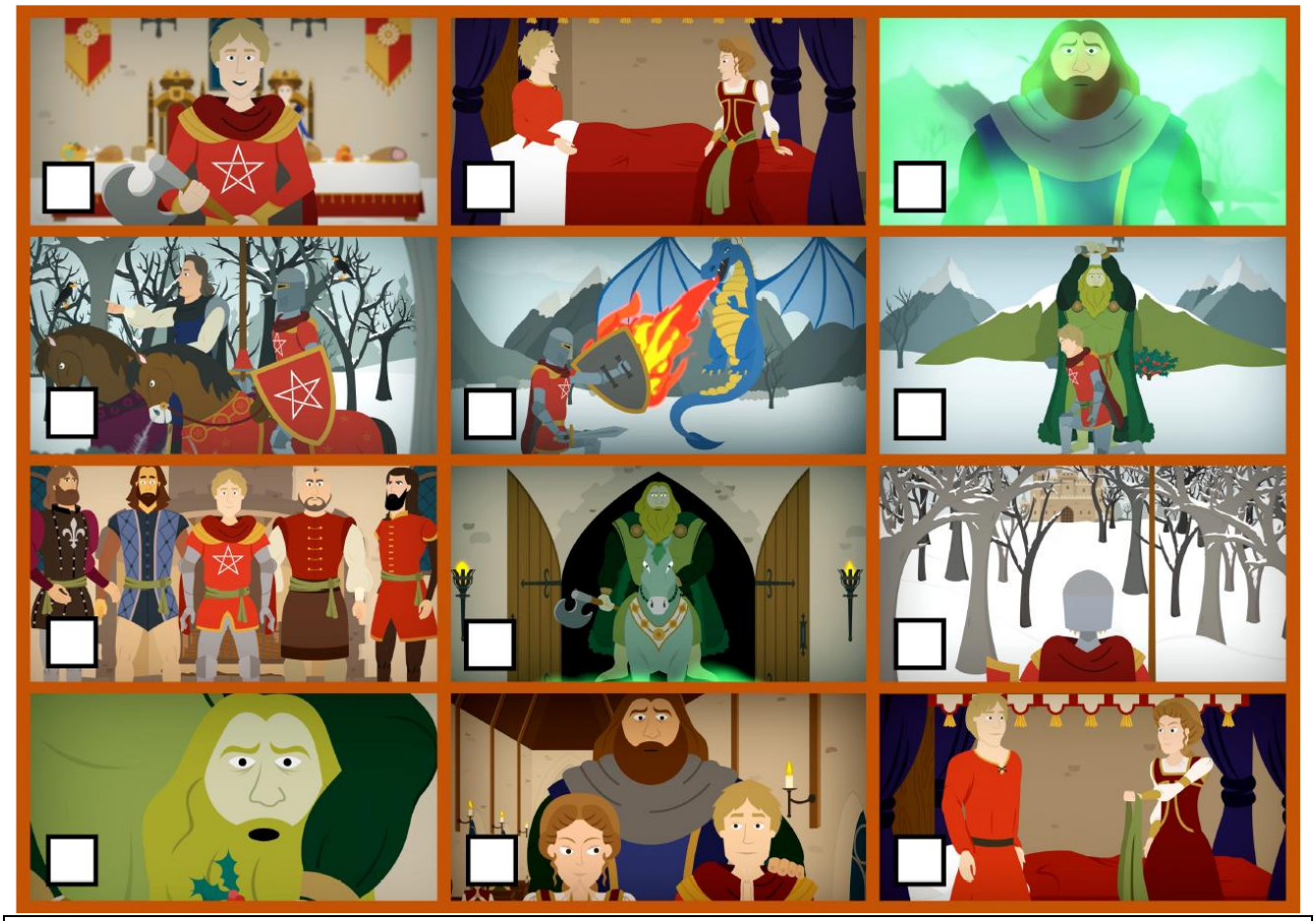
"My brave knight, I came to see if you were a man of your word. The cut on your neck is for the scarf that you took but did not tell me about". Sir Gawain stood confused by his own weakness and the generosity of his host. Unfastening the scarf, he offered it to his host.

"Keep the scarf," said the Knight, "as a token of this adventure. The debt is cleared."

The knight introduced himself as Sir Berblake. "Morgan le Fay, your own aunt, gave me with the magic charms to challenge Arthur's court," he said. "She was disguised as the old crone you saw." He bid Gawain return to the castle to get better acquainted with his aunt but Gawain politely refused, he had experienced enough magic for the moment. He made his way home and was greeted with great joy. The scar on his neck remained as the only evidence of his adventure.

As for the lady's green scarf, he wore it as a reminder, should he ever get too proud, of his faint heartedness. And all the knights agreed, for Gawain's sake, to wear also a green belt as, even the bravest man alive, they felt, would have shrunk from such a fate.

Put these images of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight in order.



How is Sir Gawain presented in '*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*'?

What is Sir Gawain like?	
How do you know? Give a quotation from the text that supports this view.	
What does your example suggest about Sir Gawain?	
Which word in particular makes you think this?	
Ext. Why does this fit in with what is expected from a knight?	

📖Use the planning in the table above to write a completed PETA(L) paragraph in your book.📖
Ext. Add another layer with a line that starts: *This is further reinforced by…*

Hero's Journey	Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
<u>The Call to Adventure</u> The hero receives a challenge that will take them away from their ordinary life, for example, a quest to follow or a dangerous mission to complete.	
<u>Into the unknown</u> The hero sets out on their adventure, entering a new world filled with dangers.	
<u>Trials and Tests</u> On the path to their final goal, the hero encounters difficult obstacles that they have to overcome.	
<u>The final challenge</u> The hero faces their greatest challenge ad must endure an ordeal to achieve the aim of their adventure.	
<u>Reward and Return</u> The hero receives some form of reward and returns to their home a changed person.	

Practising Punctuation

Read the extract from *The Rainbow Warrior* below. In the story, two knights, Sir Jolyon and Sir Gawain, have been sent to hunt a dragon and kill it. The extract has been printed without punctuation or paragraphs. Copy out the story putting in the correct punctuation and paragraphs.

You should put in:

- Capital letters
- Commas
- Hyphens
- Full stops
- Paragraphs
- One question mark
- Apostrophes
- One exclamation mark

why do you have to kill this dragon gawain asked because the king told me to the knight sighed he was not a particularly brave man and had hoped to see his old age its a great honour to have been chosen he added i will kill the dragon and my name will go down in all the songs and poems sir joylon the dragon slayer and of course ill be invited to a feast and ill sit next to the queen and you know what will be served dragon soup sir joylon fell silent thinking about the rich green broth and wondering if it would taste nicer than the hedgehog he was eating now not that hedgehog was that bad just a bit spiky once he had killed the dragon he would have to cut off its head and bring it back to the caste to be made into soup

Success Criteria

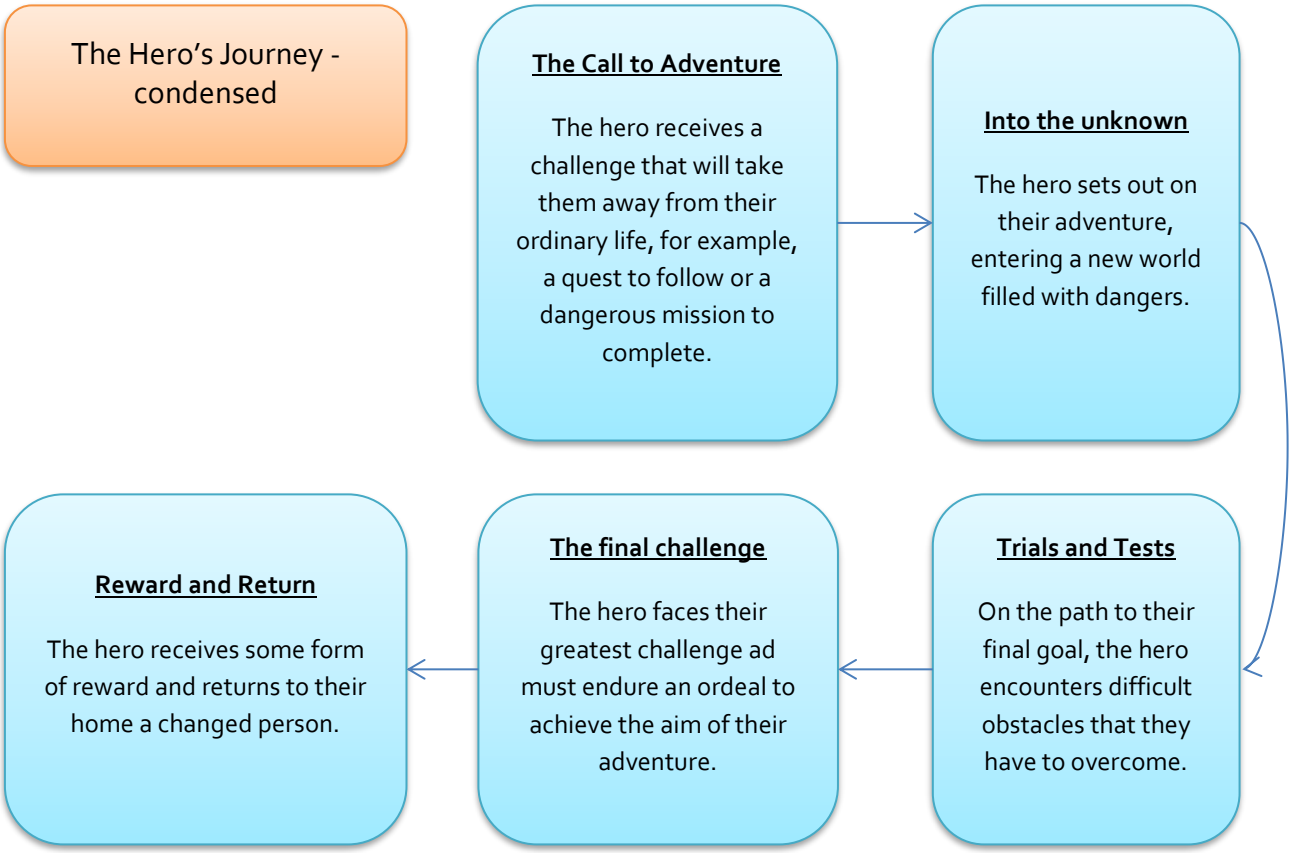
Your task is to write a section of a hero myth. Makes sure you indicate which part of the hero's journey you are producing.

AF3: To organise and present whole texts effectively

- □ write in paragraphs correctly *TIPToP*
- □ Link your paragraphs carefully
- □ make effective use of structural features throughout the text to create tension (e.g. foreshadowing) and cohesion throughout
- □ clear plotting
- □ introduction and development of characters to build interest and maintain cohesion.

AF5: To vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect

- □ Use a range of sentence types (i.e. adverbial starts, adjective starts, simple, complex, compound)
- □ Use a range of sentence lengths
- □ Use a range of paragraph lengths, including isolated lines

AF7: To select appropriate and effective vocabulary

- □ Use the third person
- □ Create dynamic descriptions using awesome adjectives and fantastic figurative language (metaphors, similes etc.)
- □ Use the senses to show not tell
- □ Develop your ideas by giving delicious details
- □ Use varied and ambitious vocabulary